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SECRET

Executive Registry
62-4231

Noted by
25 June 62

20 JUN 1962

J. F. Kennedy

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

SUBJECT : Viet Cong Ambush of Military Convoy

1. During my conversation with you on 18 June, you drew attention to the report by Homer Bigart in the 18 June edition of the New York Times concerning the strong Viet Cong attack on a military convoy near Ben Cat, north of Saigon. You desired to know whether it was correct that many villagers must have witnessed the preparations for this ambush and that they failed to inform the Ben Cat military garrison because of intimidations by the Viet Cong.

2. The CIA Station in Saigon reports that the Bigart story is substantially correct. The details of his story have been confirmed by the Ministry of Interior, by the Vietnamese Military Security Service, and the United States MACV. It clearly appears that residents in the nearby area were well aware of the ambush two to four hours in advance but were under threat not to betray the Viet Cong.

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GROUP 1
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3. The area in question is generally considered to be Viet Cong controlled though it is sparsely populated. It remains unexplained as to why artillery support was not requested by the Ben Cat garrison.

25X1 4. [redacted] 25X

25X1 [redacted] have told CIA Station representatives of an unconfirmed report that the Viet Cong attack force was disguised as South Vietnamese Army personnel. [redacted] has ordered 25X a full investigation of the incident.

5. The Agency Station Chief in Saigon notes that in a Viet Cong controlled area such as this and where the Viet Cong have both the means and willingness to carry out reprisals, there will continue to be a fear on the part of villagers to reveal foreknowledge of an attack.

(Signed) JOHN A. McCONE
John A. McCone
Director

25X1

[redacted] (19 June 1962)

Distribution:
Orig & 1 - Addressee
2 - DCI
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